

Caltrans Sets Goal to Manage Traffic Delay



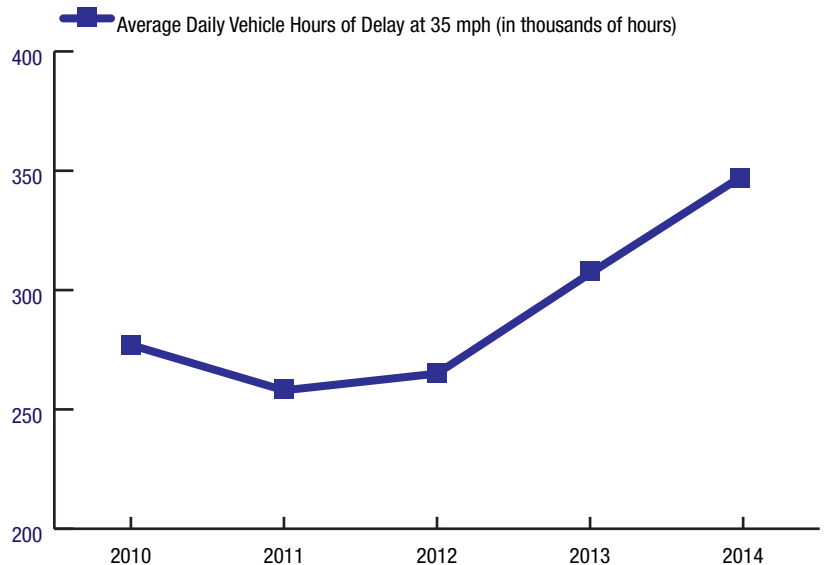
Interstate 80 near Berkeley.

For people using California's highway system, the average daily vehicle hours of delay in 2014 were the highest they had been in 10 years, and 13 percent higher than 2013. While daily vehicle hours of delay have steadily increased, Caltrans aims to manage delay so that by 2020, the daily average hours of delay at 35 miles per hour or below on urban highways does not exceed an 8 percent annual growth rate—instead of the 13 to 15 percent annual growth seen in the last two years.

In 2014, California drivers collectively sat in slow commute traffic for nearly 100 million hours. In order to help commuters make informed travel decisions, Caltrans relays real-time traffic conditions in urban areas through 511 and electronic message signs to provide travel times, notification of incidents, and points of congestion. Caltrans works with its local and regional partners to plan for, and respond to, the needs of a growing customer base: all those who drive, take transit, walk or bike. By working together, Caltrans and its partners can maximize limited resources to reduce travel delay.

Source: Division of Traffic Operations
Contributor: Tim Hart and Rich Stone

Statewide Average Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay



California's general highway speed limit is 65 miles per hour, with 70 miles per hour allowed on a few freeways. The industry standard for measuring delay is 35 miles per hour, with speeds below 35 miles per hour considered heavy congestion. Caltrans measures the loss of time due to congestion as daily vehicle hours of delay. This measure shows that statewide, California motorists collectively sat in bad traffic, or speeds below 35 miles per hour, for an average of nearly 348,000 hours each commute day in 2014. Speeds under 35 miles per hour increase fuel use, which in turn increases greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, Caltrans has set a goal to manage the growth rate of the average daily vehicle hours of delay to 8 percent or less by 2020.